AUM

The way of the Adept is like the way of the bird in the air. He goes through all places and leaves no trace of himself, but the effect of his work may be seen by all men.
—*The Path*

THEOSOPHY

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DEFINING THEOSOPHY

EVERYONE who makes earnest effort to spread the doctrines of Theosophy encounters, sooner or later, certain seeming or actual paradoxes. If a questioner asks, "What *is* Theosophy?", there may come, before the attempted answer, a moment of silent frustration. Theosophy, the student may say to himself, is absolute, eternal truth, and how can anyone "define" that? For there is always obligation to note the intent of H.P.B.'s warning in "What Is Truth?"—

> There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

Yet it would surely be a mistake simply to identify Theosophy as "relative truth"! Theosophy is always more than any given expression of it. H.P.B., as Mr. Judge somewhere remarks, spoke to the mind of the race as she found it, and she often referred to the inadequacy of the language she was obliged to use for this purpose. Yet despite these limitations there is in her writing a surge of meaning which reaches beyond the intellectual development of the time. In the very statement of the doctrines of Theosophy are implicit hints and explicit counsels to the reader that he will have to penetrate to deeper, more inward meanings for himself. The words are but guides. They are clues to the path, the discipline, the heights of self-discovery.

One cannot, however, leave the matter here. For to say that the

teachings are but guides seems a minimizing distortion unless it be added that they represent an ideal approximation of the truth which the human race is now capable of understanding and applying. The teachings, then, are to be thought of as the work of *Teachers*—the recorded expression of Elder Brothers of the race who have insight into both the possibilities and limitations of human beings in the present cycle. These Teachers know what can be told in philosophical or metaphysical terms, what requires symbolic communication, and what cannot be spoken of at all, save, perhaps, in the language of remote abstraction. With each cycle of human instruction by such Teachers, the inner and outer circumstances of racial development change. The conceptual language of Theosophical impartation grows in subtlety and power of communication. What was said in *Isis Unveiled* was less than what was given in *The Secret Doctrine*. Yet the content of *Isis* had its own symmetry, its balance of pedagogic expression, its appeal at a level of generality to be later confirmed and amplified with the detail and filling in provided by *The Secret Doctrine*. Thus the two books supplement each other, and both, while "different," are Theosophy.

It becomes evident that Theosophy, while initially identified as the body of writings left by H.P.B.—epitomized as well as amplified through numerous applications by Mr. Judge—should also be conceived of as having a dynamic existence in the growing understanding of the student—in human perception of its truth as a living correspondence of the nature of things. Just as philosophy is the love and pursuit of Truth, so Theosophy is a growing toward and progressive realization of it. This meaning, implicit in numerous statements, is needed for a better comprehension of what is intended when Theosophy is spoken of.

But is there a "Theosophy" which does not change, even in form, with the accumulation of ascending cycles? That there is indeed such a body of knowledge seems clear from H.P.B.'s statement in "The Negators of Science." There she speaks of the language known to initiates and hierophants—"the language of symbolism and allegory." This is a language apparently unaffected by the vicissitudes of historical and karmic cycles in human affairs. It must represent, therefore, the "perfection" of meanings—fulfilled and completed meanings—which relate to the entire cycle of existence; and changeless, therefore, throughout time. H.P.B.

also refers to this language in her Preface to *The Voice of the Silence,* and in the article named she says:

> This language has suffered neither modification nor amplification from those remote times down to this day. It still exists and is still taught. There are those who have preserved the knowledge of it, and also of the arcane meaning of the Mysteries; and it is from these Masters that the writer . . . had the good fortune of learning, howbeit imperfectly, the said language. Hence her claim to a more correct comprehension of the arcane portion of the ancient texts. . . .

We have, then, at H.P.B.'s hands, a rendition of this ancient, changeless teaching—a translation into the English of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of ideas partly within our comprehension, yet which also, by an inherent energy, break out of and expand the Western conceptions of man, nature, law, and reality, even as we struggle to grasp their intent.

Obviously, there are levels of meaning implied by the term "Theosophy." One may begin by understanding that it indicates a book or a statement. Then one may think of it as a high goal of truth beyond the horizons of our present understanding. And then it becomes reasonable to think of Theosophy as a process of progressive inner realization—indeed, a process without end.

In some ways, this thinking of Theosophy as the movement toward truth seems the most important of all. In "What Is Truth?", H.P.B. said:

> Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say—develop in you the *inner* knowledge. From the time when the Delphic oracle said to the enquirer "Man, know thyself," no greater or more important truth was ever taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to even many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to *know himself, i.e.,* acquire the *inner* perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity,* and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it. To reach the state during which man sees and senses it, we have to paralyze the senses of the external man of clay. This is a difficult task, we may be told, and most people will, at this rate, prefer to remain satisfied with relative

truths, no doubt. But to approach even terrestrial truths requires, first of all, *love of truth for its own sake,* for otherwise no recognition of it will follow.

"To fully define Theosophy," H.P.B. declares in "What Is Theosophy?", we must consider it under all its aspects," and this she proceeds to do at some length, identifying it, again and again, as "The search after man's diviner 'self' "; then, to answer the question, "What Are the Theosophists?", she points to the "tracks" left by the great thinkers and seekers of history: "The line of philosophical heredity, from Kapila through Epicurus to James Mill; from Patanjali through Plotinus to Jacob Böhme, can be traced like the course of a river through a landscape."

She asks:

> With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: *"As a body*—Nothing." The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself—the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry.

It was inevitable that critics would arise to see in this a contradiction. Here was a declaration that the Society had no creed—that Theosophy is essentially a process of subjective enlightenment, not to be identified with doctrines or any religio-philosophical tradition. Her statement is unambiguous:

> As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature whether materialists—those who find in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," or spiritualists—that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere that *Presence,* the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivisible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is ALL, and NOTHING; ubiquitous yet one; the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything, contained in all. It will, we think, be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists,

> such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought —Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.

This article appeared in the first issue of the *Theosophist,* in 1879. The breadth and hospitality of its account of Theosophists and Theosophy are at once apparent. While to the world—and even to those invited to become Theosophists—the terms of definition of both the Wisdom Religion and its seekers might have seemed, and still seem, imprecise and vague, they were not vague to H.P.B., and were not meant to be imprecise. She simply wrote at a level of generality where the perception of precise meaning requires an inner awareness, where vision and understanding must provide exactitude. Motive is also a defining factor in this region of discourse, giving the reference points of what she said, and indicating that compromises, half-measures, and superficialities were ruled out by her real meaning.

Ten years later, in 1889, one year after publication of *The Secret Doctrine,* this open platform and wide invitation were challenged by critics who asserted that the "specific" doctrines repeated in Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism,* in the system of thought expounded by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine,* and elaborated in her contributions to the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer,* were now becoming collectively known as "Theosophy." "What," these critics asked, "is your explanation of this?"

H.P.B. offered this formal reply:

> "To call them so is a 'collective' mistake; one of those loose applications of terms to things that ought to be more carefully defined; and the neglect of members to do so is now bearing its fruits. In fact it is an oversight as harmful as that which followed the confusion of the two terms 'buddhism' and 'bodhism,' leading the Wisdom philosophy to be mistaken for the religion of Buddha."

She also said:

> But it is still urged that when these doctrines are examined it becomes very clear that all the work which the Society as a body has done in the East and the West depended upon them. This is obviously true in the case of the doctrine of the underlying unity of all religions and the existence, as claimed by Theosophists, of a common source called the Wisdom-religion of the secret teaching, from which, according to the same

> claims, all existing forms of religion are directly or indirectly derived. Admitting this, we are pressed to explain, how can the T.S. as a body be said to have no special views or doctrines to inculcate, no creed and no dogmas, when these are "the back-bone of the Society, its very heart and soul"?

Her answer to this argument (given in the article, "Philosophers and Philosophicules," *Lucifer,* October, 1889) deserves particular attention, since its implications are by no means all on the surface:

> To this we can only answer that it is still another error. That these teachings are most undeniably the "back-bone of the Theosophical Societies" *in the West,* but not at all in the East, where such Branch Societies number almost five to one in the West. Were these special doctrines the "heart and soul" of the whole body, then Theosophy and its T.S. would have died out in India and Ceylon since 1885—and this is surely not the case. For, not only have they been virtually abandoned at Adyar since that year, as there was no one to teach them, but while some Brahmin Theosophists were very much opposed to that teaching being made public, others—the more orthodox—positively opposed them as being inimical to their exoteric systems. . . .
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> It is vain to protest any longer; useless, to assure our opponents that belief in *Buddhism,* whether esoteric or exoteric, is no more expected by, nor obligatory in, our Society than reverence for the monkey-god Hanuman, him of the singed tail, or belief in Mahomet and his canonized mare. It is unprofitable to try and explain that since there are in the T.S. as many Brahmins, Mussulmans, Parsis, Jews and Christians as there are Buddhists, and more, all cannot be expected to become followers of Buddha, nor even of Buddhism, howsoever esoteric. Nor can they be made to realize that the Occult doctrines—a few fundamental teachings of which are broadly outlined in Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism"—are not the *whole* of Theosophy, nor even the whole of the secret doctrines of the East, but a very small portion of these: Occultism itself being but one of the Sciences of Theosophy, or the WISDOM-Religion, and by no means the whole of THEOSOPHY.

In short, no limiting definition of Theosophy is possible at all!

We see that H.P.B. was obliged to cope with not only the moral weaknesses of modern society, but also its narrow intellectual habits. That one might maintain an open mind, feel hospitality to all expressions of religious faith, and at the same time give major attention, perhaps as a true disciple, to what H.P.B. put of record in her books—to recognize her as in fact a *Teacher* —seemed a contradiction to those used to separative and exclud-

ing forms of definition. Yet it is true that joining the Society was one thing, and choosing H.P.B. as *teacher* another. The door was open to all, yet not all recognized that in H.P.B. they had access to a historic transmission of the Wisdom-Religion, a presentation best adapted to their understanding, and therefore giving unique opportunity both for personal growth and for service to the human race.

Somewhere—perhaps in another *Lucifer* article—H.P.B. referred to the readers of that magazine as in effect her "disciples," and she certainly addressed those readers in terms which called for heroic commitment in response. Her work was to make a place in the Western world where the Wisdom Religion might at last be "at home," be recognized and appreciated in its true character; and where the first Object of the Movement—the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood—might be fulfilled through growing understanding of what brotherhood means and how it is served. Study of the doctrines H.P.B. promulgated was the means to this understanding, as both *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy* make clear.

It becomes apparent that a grasp of the meaning of "Theosophy," as we have it explained by H.P.B., involves thorough-going reform in the habits and processes of thought in the West. There is in effect a fresh definition needed at every level or degree of understanding, with no finality in any one statement. Actually, the most fruitful meaning of Theosophy is always that supplied by the one who inquires, since no particular formulation, but rather what that one is able to understand, constitutes his best working definition until he improves it himself. In terms of verbal expression, words having a philosophical component—which have a *direction* of meaning rather than a fixed content—prove the most useful. Since philosophic meanings are forged by the inquirer, formal definitions must always take this into account.

It hardly seems necessary to add that this mode of speech or explanation usually seems obscure to those who believe that clarity of ideas always depends upon unambiguous, finite terms of description. This is the demand for familiarly contained meanings, natural to the personal mind—the mind which is itself created by finite limitation. So, when inquirers first begin to wrestle with Theosophical definitions, it seems inevitable that definite meaning will appear to escape through some term whose content can-

not be "nailed down."

This is a psychological ordeal the results of which are writ large throughout history in the formation of sects, the elaboration of creeds, the confident assertion of dogmas. The presence of the divine in the personal, or working through it; of the infinite in the finite—"Behold this my divine mystery," invites Krishna—is a continual frustration to the logic of sense-perception. It seems a cavalier neglect of the measures of external demonstration, and of the longing for certainty of those who are satisfied by finite goals. Indeed, one could say that the continuity of the Theosophical Movement, after the departure of the Teacher, requires steering a hazardous course between the Scylla of sectarianism and the Charybdis of wishy-washy eclecticism. There are, however, skills which may be acquired that help the humble helmsmen of this undertaking, with guides to protect the unwary. Involved is a carefully maintained balance between self-reliant open-mindedness *and* following the lines laid down by those who, in what they said and did, showed the clearest understanding of human need.

"SENSITIVE POINTS"

Every cell in the body has its own life and powers of perception; this includes all the cells of the body in their differing degrees. We as self-conscious beings perceive the physical plane through the perceptions of these collective cells. Hence we look through the eyes of the lowest. The same is true of the man as a whole in his perceiving. Higher beings than we contact this plane in part through our eyes, mental or physical, and may when necessary use a physical body on this plane of perception. Our contact on any plane of substance is by means of an instrument made up of the lives of that plane. Each of such lives is a sensitive point and reflects the plane to which it belongs in some degree. Sufficient of these lives of different degrees gathered together on that plane will give an embodiment of sensitive points which are capable of reflecting everything on that plane, so that on any plane the Highest sees through the eyes of the lowest.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

STUDIES IN ISIS UNVEILED

SPIRITS OF VARIOUS KINDS

FROM the moment when the foetal embryo is formed until the old man, gasping his last, drops into the grave, neither the beginning nor the end is understood by scholastic science; all before us is a blank, all after us chaos. For it there is no evidence as to the relations between spirit, soul, and body, either before or after death. The mere life-principle itself presents an unsolvable enigma, upon the study of which materialism has vainly exhausted its intellectual powers. In the presence of a corpse the skeptical physiologist stands dumb when asked by his pupil whence came the former tenant of that empty box, and whither it has gone. The pupil must either, like his master, rest satisfied with the explanation that protoplasm made the man, and force vitalized and will now consume his body, or he must go outside the walls of his college and the books of its library to find an explanation of the mystery.

Why should there be an attraction between the molecules of matter, and none between those of spirit? By whatsoever name the physicists may call the energizing principle in matter is of no account; it is a subtile something apart from the matter itself, and, as it escapes their detection, it must be something besides matter. If the law of attraction is admitted as governing the one, why should it be excluded from influencing the other? Leaving logic to answer, we turn to the common experience of mankind, and there find a mass of testimony corroborative of the immortality of the soul, if we judge but from analogies. But we have more than that—we have the unimpeachable testimony of thousands upon thousands, that there is a regular science of the soul, which, notwithstanding that it is now denied the right of a place among other sciences, *is* a science. This science, by penetrating the arcana of nature far deeper than our modern philosophy ever dreamed possible, teaches us how to force the *invisible* to become visible; the existence of elementary spirits; the nature and magical properties

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NOTE.—This article is made up of passages from *Isis Unveiled*, topically arranged. The pages from which the statements are taken are given at the conclusion of the article. This article is part of a series that was first printed in volumes 5 and 6 of *Theosophy*.

of the astral light; the power of living men to bring themselves into communication with the former through the latter.

The existence of spirit in the common mediator, the ether, is denied by materialism; while theology makes of it a personal god. Every organized thing in this world, visible as well as invisible, has an element appropriate to itself. The fish lives and breathes in the water; the plant consumes carbonic acid, which for animals and men produces death; some beings are fitted for rarefied strata of air, others exist only in the densest. Life, to some, is dependent on sunlight, to others, upon darkness; and so the wise economy of nature adapts to each existing condition some living form. These analogies warrant the conclusion that, not only is there no unoccupied portion of universal nature, but also that for each thing that has life, special conditions are furnished, and, being furnished, they are necessary. Now, assuming that there is an invisible side to the universe, the fixed habit of nature warrants the conclusion that this half is occupied, like the other half; and that each group of its occupants is supplied with the indispensable conditions of existence. It is as illogical to imagine that identical conditions are furnished to all, as it would be to maintain such a theory respecting the inhabitants of the domain of visible nature.

To say that all spirits are alike, or fitted to the same atmosphere, or possessed of like powers, or governed by the same attractions—electric, magnetic, odic, astral, it matters not which—is as absurd as though one should say that all planets have the same nature, or that all animals are amphibious, or all men can be nourished on the same food. It accords with reason to suppose that the grossest natures among the spirits will sink to the lowest depths of the spiritual atmosphere—in other words, be found nearest to the earth. Inversely, the purest would be farthest away. In what, were we to coin a word, we should call the *Psychomatics* of Occultism, it is as unwarrantable to assume that either of these grades of spirits can occupy the place, or subsist in the conditions, of the other, as in hydraulics it would be to expect that two liquids of different densities could exchange their markings on the scale of Beaume's hydrometer.

Whether or not the men of science are willing to concede the correctness of the Hermetic theory of the physical evolution of man from higher and more spiritual natures, they themselves show us how the race has progressed from the lowest observed point to

its present development. And, as all nature seems to be made up of analogies, is it unreasonable to affirm that the same progressive development of individual forms has prevailed among the inhabitants of the *unseen* universe? If such marvellous effects have been caused by evolution upon our little insignificant planet, producing reasoning and intuitive men from some higher type of the ape family, why suppose that the boundless realms of space are inhabited only by disembodied *angelic* forms? Why not give place in that vast domain to the spiritual duplicates of these hairy, long-armed and half-reasoning ancestors, their predecessors, and all their successors, down to our time? Of course, the spiritual parts of such primeval members of the human family would be as uncouth and undeveloped as were their physical bodies. While they made no attempt to calculate the duration of the "grand cycle," the Hermetic philosophers yet maintained that, according to the cyclic law, the living human race must inevitably and collectively return one day to that point of departure, where man was first clothed with "coats of skin"; or, to express it more clearly, the human race must, in accordance with the law of evolution, be finally *physically* spiritualized.

Lowest in the scale of being are those invisible creatures called by the kabalist the "elementary." There are three distinct classes of these. The highest, in intelligence and cunning, are the so-called terrestrial spirits. They are the *larvae*, or shadows of those who have lived on earth, have refused all spiritual light, remained and died deeply immersed in the mire of matter, and from whose sinful souls the immortal spirit has gradually separated. The second class is composed of the invisible antitypes of the men *to be* born. No form can come into objective existence—from the highest to the lowest—before the abstract ideal of this form—or, as Aristotle would call it, the *privation* of this form—is called forth. Before an artist paints a picture every feature of it exists already in his imagination; to have enabled us to discern a watch, this particular watch must have existed in its abstract form in the watchmaker's mind. So with future men.

Only it must not be understood that this *thought* creates matter. No; it creates but the design for the future form; the matter which serves to make this design having always been in existence, and having been prepared to form a human body, through a series of progressive transformations, as the result of evolution. Forms

pass; ideas that created them and the material which gave them objectiveness, remain. These models, as yet devoid of immortal spirits, are "elementals,"—properly speaking, *psychic embryos*—which, when their time arrives, die out of the invisible world, and are born into this visible one as human infants, receiving in *transitu* that divine breath called spirit which completes the perfect man. This class cannot communicate *objectively* with men.

The third class are the "elementals" proper, which never evolve into human beings, but occupy, as it were, a specific step of the ladder of being, and, by comparison with the others, may properly be called nature-spirits, or cosmic agents of nature, each being confined to its own element and never transgressing the bounds of others. These are what Tertullian called "the princes of the powers of the air."

This class is believed to possess but one of the three attributes of man. They have neither immortal spirits nor tangible bodies; only astral forms, which partake, in a distinguishing degree, of the element to which they belong and also of the ether. They are a combination of sublimated matter and a rudimental mind. Some are changeless, but still have no separate individuality, acting collectively, so to say. Others, of certain elements and species, change form under a fixed law which kabalists explain. The most solid of their bodies is ordinarily just immaterial enough to escape perception by our physical eyesight, but not so unsubstantial but that they can be perfectly recognized by the inner, or clairvoyant vision. They not only exist and can all live in ether, but can handle and direct it for the production of physical effects, as readily as we can compress air or water for the same purpose by pneumatic and hydraulic apparatus; in which occupation they are readily helped by the "human elementary." More than this; they can so condense it as to make to themselves tangible bodies, which by their Protean powers they can cause to assume such likeness as they choose, by taking as their models the portraits they find stamped in the memory of the persons present. It is not necessary that the sitter should be thinking at the moment of the one represented. His image may have faded many years before. The mind receives indelible impressions even from chance acquaintance or persons encountered but once. As a few seconds exposure of the sensitized photograph plate is all that is requisite to preserve indefinitely the image of the sitter, so it is with the mind.

Though spiritualists discredit them ever so much, these nature-spirits are realities. The Christians call them "devils," "imps of Satan," and like characteristic names. They are nothing of the kind, but simply creatures of ethereal matter, irresponsible, and neither good nor bad, unless influenced by a superior intelligence.

What should sensible spiritualists think of the character of *angel* guides, who after monopolizing, perhaps for years, a poor medium's time, health and means, suddenly abandons him when he most needs their help? None but creatures *without soul or conscience* would be guilty of such injustice. Conditions?—mere sophistry. What sort of spirits must they be who would not summon if necessary an army of spirit-friends (if such there be) to snatch the innocent medium from the pit dug for his feet? Such things happened in the olden time, such may happen now. *There were apparitions before modern spiritualism, and phenomena like ours in every previous age.* If modern manifestations are a reality and palpable facts, so must have been the so-called "miracles" and thaumaturgic exploits of old; or if the latter are but fictions of superstition, so must be the former, for they rest on no better testimony.

But, in this daily-increasing torrent of occult phenomena that rushes from one end of the globe to the other, though two-thirds of the manifestations are proved spurious, what of those which are proved genuine without doubt or cavil? Among these may be found communications coming through non-professional as well as professional mediums, which are sublime and divinely grand. Who are those spirits, what those powers or intelligences which are evidently *outside* of the medium proper and entities *per se?* These *intelligences* deserve the appellation; and they differ as widely from the generality of spooks and goblins that hover around the cabinets for physical manifestations, as day from night.

Be it however a "spirit of health or goblin damn'd" it is of little consequence; for if it be once proved that its organism is not solid matter, then it must be and is a "spirit," an apparition, a *breath.* It is an intelligence which acts outside our organisms, and therefore must belong to some existing even though unseen race of beings. But what is it? What is this something which thinks and even speaks but yet is not human; that is impalpable and yet not a disembodied spirit; that simulates affection, passion, remorse, fear, joy, but yet feels neither? What is this canting creature which

rejoices in cheating the truthful inquirer and mocking at sacred human feeling? For, if not Mr. Crookes's Katie King, other similar creatures have done all these. Who can fathom the mystery? The true psychologist alone. And where should he go for his textbooks but to the neglected alcoves of libraries where the works of despised hermetists and theurgists have been gathering dust these many years.

Skeptics, and even skeptical spiritualists, have often unjustly accused mediums of fraud, when denied what they consider their inalienable right to test the spirits. But where there is one such case, there are fifty in which spiritualists have permitted themselves to be practiced upon by tricksters, while they neglected to appreciate genuine manifestations procured for them by their mediums. Ignorant of the laws of mediumship, such do not know that when an honest medium is once taken possession of by spirits, whether disembodied or elemental, he is no longer his own master. He cannot control the actions of the spirits, nor even his own. They make him a puppet to dance at their pleasure while they pull the wires behind the scenes. The false medium may seem entranced, and yet be playing tricks all the while; while the real medium may appear to be in full possession of his senses, when in fact he is far away, and his body is animated by his "Indian guide," or "control." Or, he may be entranced in his cabinet, while his astral body (double) or *doppelganger*, is walking about the room, moved by another intelligence.

Far from us be the thought of casting an unjust slur on physical mediums. Harassed by various intelligences, reduced by their overpowering influence—which their weak and nervous natures are unable to shake off—to a morbid state, which at last becomes chronic, they are impeded by these "influences" from undertaking other occupation. They become mentally and physically unfit for any other. Who can judge them harshly when, driven to the last extremity, they are constrained to accept mediumship as a business? And heaven knows whether the calling is one to be envied by any one! It is not mediums, real *true*, and genuine mediums that we would ever blame, but their patrons, the spiritualists. The ancients, unlike ourselves, could "try" the spirits and discern the difference between the good and evil ones, the human and the elemental. They also knew that unregulated spirit intercourse brought ruin upon the individual and disaster to the community.

This view of mediumship may be novel and perhaps repugnant to many modern spiritualists; but still it is the view taught in the ancient philosophy, and supported by the experience of mankind from time immemorial.

We are far from believing that all the spirits that communicate at circles are of the classes called "Elemental" and "Elementary." Many—among those who control the medium subjectively to speak, write, and otherwise act in various ways—are human, disembodied spirits. Whether the majority of such spirits are good or *bad*, largely depends on the private morality of the medium, much on the circle present, and a great deal on the intensity and object of their purpose. But in any case, human spirits can *never* materialize themselves *in propria persona*.

The recognized laws of physical science account for but a few of the more objective of the so-called spiritual phenomena. While proving the reality of certain visible effects of an unknown force, they have not thus far enabled scientists to control at will even this portion of the phenomena. The truth is that the professors have not yet discovered the necessary conditions of their occurrence. They must go as deeply into the study of the triple nature of man—physiological, psychological, and *divine*—as did their predecessors, the magicans, theurgists, and thaumaturgists of old.

NOTE.—The volume and page references to *Isis Unveiled*, from which the foregoing article is compiled, are, in the order of the excerpts, as follows: volume i. 336, 340, 341, 343, 344, 295, 310, 311, 325, 53, 54, 360, 488-9, 490, 67.

"THE RAYS OF TRUTH"

Let no man be unaware that while there is a great joy in this belief there is also a great sorrow. Being true, being *the Law*, all the great forces are set in motion by the student. He now thinks he has given up ambition and comfort. The ambition and comfort he has given up are those of the lower plane, the mere reflection of the great ambitions and comforts of a larger life. The rays of truth burn up the covers time has placed upon those seeds, and then the seeds begin to sprout and cause new struggles. Do not leave any earnest inquirer in ignorance of this. It has cost others many years and tears of blood to self-learn it.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THOUGHTS ON CLAIRVOYANCE

TO many students the term "clairvoyance" means the ability to see something other than normally falls within the range of average physical plane vision. Although it is quite true that such an interpretation of the word is natural, and allowable, it is equally true that this view is wholly materialistic. In a wider and higher sense clairvoyance is the power to view any and all subjects or objects with *unprejudiced* vision. This is why true clairvoyance is a spiritual power, arising in a spiritual quality of the one who perceives; and why it is so extraordinarily rare—as also the reason why what is ordinarily called "clairvoyance" is so little desired by students of Theosophy who are acquainted with the Teachers' own writings and are beginning to sense something of their true inwardness.

How often have we heard somebody say of this or that one, he or she is "clairvoyant"; or perhaps even endow himself with this supposedly desirable power—assuming a slightly deprecating air in the latter instance, but quite unwilling or unable to conceal his elation because he is not as other men. Were a better understanding had by such an one of the facts implied by his condition, he would carefully conceal it from the knowledge of his fellows, if indeed he really *were* "clairvoyantly" inclined—or put an end to his pretentions instanter, if perchance he were posing to stimulate their interest in himself.

Such "clairvoyance" implies abnormality. And abnormality anywhere, and in whatever degree, is abnormality *everywhere*—in some degree. Do such "clairvoyants" ever assay one hundred per cent pure gold under unprejudiced analysis of their ability to meet and dispose of competently the affairs of everyday life? Are they steady, reliable, efficient and practical in industry or professional life; as friends, fathers or mothers, as citizens, teachers, exemplars of the altruistic life—are their fruits admirable? Are they simple, unassuming, quiet, modest, happy, sensible—as a genuinely advanced being must necessarily be supposed to be?

Unprejudiced vision will disclose that those who are "psychic,"

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as some loosely designate this abnormal condition, travel an unbalanced path in this mundane and exceedingly practical world of waking consciousness—slothful and inept in the fulfilment of duty, intellectually below par, unable to relate one thing to another logically, and as a rule exceedingly personal, vain and shallow. They are blown about by every wind of circumstance, though quite unaware of that utterly palpable fact; wide open to almost any suggestion, but without the intellectual persistence that might enable them to carry to completion the effort temporarily seen to be desirable. In short, they are mediumistic—out of their own control—much of the time.

What is unprejudiced vision? It is the ability to see things as they are—uncolored by preconception, fancy, fear, liking or disliking. It implies also some unassailable basis of judgment by means of which relativities can be evaluated. This is true clairvoyance, as applied to this or to any other plane of being.

The Soul is thus clairvoyant. The Soul is the Perceiver, vision itself, pure and unmodified (unprejudiced), and it looks directly upon *ideas*. But the Soul does not look *directly* upon the objects of this world—or any other, for that matter. It is veiled on every plane of being, by the very being whose existence it makes possible. What veils it? The instruments of contact and perception evolved and developed thus far on each of the planes; and these are composed of the "lives" of the plane to which they naturally belong, each instrument, "principle," or sheath of the Soul constituting that sphere of influence, or radius of activity, which the being possessing them has been able to exert by means of his intelligent thought and action. The Soul, and its "environments," thus make up the "man," the human being.

Acting on any plane—or rather, supplying the power by means of which action is performed upon any plane—the Soul "acts" on the basis of what it perceives on that plane. Its perceptions thereon depend for their validity upon the perfection of the instrument in use—as also upon the accurate synchronous vibration of all the other instruments by means of which the perceptions to be considered are presented to the Soul—the Source of vision. Thus, if a man has a "crooked *manas*," whatever is presented to the Soul—whether perceived manasically, or through lower instruments via *manas*—will be distorted. But the Soul acts upon the basis of the ideas seen; hence in such case the action itself will be distorted.

errant. It is as if one acted in life on the basis presented by one of the usual false and silly moving pictures with which we are so fond of lulling ourselves into temporary forgetfulness of realities. The Soul does that, and then the current of intuition is stepped down into impulse, and that of impulse into action itself—a false and imperfect action, because the pictures placed before the light were themselves false and imperfect—prejudiced—the photographic results of selfishness and ignorance.

True clairvoyance, then, is *direct perception* on every plane, the instruments of perception having been developed into perfect mirrors, and all being in synchronous vibration. This is what H. P. Blavatsky means when she uses such a phrase as, "the flashing gaze of the seer." It is seeing things as they are. And during the incarnations of altruistic thought and effort required to develop a complete man-instrument to this degree of perfection, the being who thus "evolves" develops *pari passu* the intelligence which enables him to correlate what he sees, and act unerringly under any and every circumstance, on any of the planes of being.

A far, far cry—such clairvoyance—or so it seems to us, as students stumbling along on the small, old Path. But is it so, after all? Perhaps enlightenment may not be so far away. Let us consider.

According to the Teaching, we are Spiritual Beings, and not these obstructing personalities at all. We *were* Spiritual Beings when this Earth began—beings of power and knowledge and glory —who came forward under brotherly necessity at a certain stage of the development of the planet and incarnated in bodies of flesh, in order to aid the uprising evolution of the lower kingdoms—to guide it and give it true trends. We "clothed ourselves" with the "lives"—physical, astral, kamic. How else could we contact and influence them?

While operating in these lower sheaths, we are not aware of our own true nature. We identify ourselves with the sheaths—the very veils that hide us from ourselves. Having imperfect control as yet of the congeries of "lives" we are using and working with, they control us—and the "personality" which results from this weird range of psychic and noetic action is "that thing which we have with pain created for our own use," as *Light on the Path* phrases it, "and by means of which we purpose . . . to reach to the life beyond individuality" (personality). For having plunged down into

sentient existence, the only way out for the engulfed Spiritual Being is the *opposite* of the way in—to rise up out of that condition! As he rises, those "lives" which he has gathered unto himself rise with him—not to self-consciousness, of course, but to a higher stage than would be possible to them working alone—into an organized, qualified, effective and complex instrument, fit for a Spiritual Being to use in a work of altruism which has the whole of Nature for its object.

Thus can the sheer, logical teachings be rationalized. We have every reason for hope and courage, and for the effort that results from a dawning perception of "what it is all about." We are on our way and we know where we are going—and we may *know* that this way is up and out, if we have reached the point where we are reasonably able to rationalize it.

The inhibiting factors are not in us, as Spiritual Beings; nor in us as physical or astro-physical beings, for these last two sheaths are but effects and will quickly and easily fall into line if the "middle principle" is co-ordinated with the manasic entity. So we actually have but one task: to gain control of *kama-manas* ("lower manas"). And strange as it may seem, we are already well along with that bitter and difficult work as soon as we have seen, in a realizing sense, that such is the work in hand. Antaskarana has been formed, or at least outlined, thereupon—the "bridge" between the higher and the lower man. As we get to work here in the physical waking state in dead earnest, *Ishwara* "comes to the aid of the lower." Ishwara is the spiritual person—ourselves, in fact. So there is a dual action of rectification and synchronistic adjustment: from without, within; and from within, without. "The fierce but gentle Krishna" begins to fight within us—the "Warrior." Happy and blessed we, when we learn how to "stand aside in the coming battle!" But this attitude of detachment can be arrived at momentarily, reproduced, held for longer periods by patient persistence, and at last held permanently—a spiritual possession.

True clairvoyance is then our very own: the power to view any and all subjects or objects with unprejudiced vision. With its development and use by contemplation and action (and most of all, by action) our Will increases. We bring to bear our power and knowledge as Spiritual Beings upon this waking, physical world.

This represents the highest fruits of Occultism. This is what is

meant by "bringing through" the knowledge of the inner nature. For what good is anything that cannot be *used;* that is incapable of *practical* application?

Alas! How very different from the *dream* of Occultism under which so many sincere and earnest students labor! It is not the knowledge of other planes of being that we need to seek. We already have this. Our task is to make this knowledge available here and now, on this Earth, in waking consciousness—to gain that control and equanimity which permits our own purposive energy to flow unobstructed, though unperceived by others—for their benefit.

A Bodily Symbol

Eyes are bold as lions,—roving, running, leaping, here and there, far and near. They speak all languages. They wait for no introduction; they are no Englishmen; ask no leave of age, or rank; they respect neither poverty nor riches, neither learning nor power nor virtue nor sex; but intrude, and come again, and go through and through you in a moment of time. What inundation of life and thought is discharged from one soul into another, through them! The glance is natural magic. The mysterious communication established across a house between two entire strangers, moves all the springs of wonder. The communication by the glance is in the greatest part not subject to the control of the will. It is the bodily symbol of identity of nature. We look into the eyes to know if this other form is another self, and the eyes will not lie, but make a faithful confession what inhabitant is there. The revelations are sometimes terrific. The confession of a low, usurping devil is there made, and the observer shall seem to feel the stirring of owls and bats and horned hoofs, where he looked for innocence and simplicity. 'Tis remarkable too that the spirit that appears at the windows of the house does at once invest himself in a new form of his own to the mind of the beholder.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

letters • questions • comment

In his article, "Why Races Die Out," Mr. Judge speaks of races which decline when the Egos inhabiting them "have had such a long experience in that race environment that they have begun to emigrate elsewhere because their experience has wrought in their character changes which unfit them for dealing with the old bodies, and those are left for the starting of other less progressed men." What sort of changes are these, and what kind of experience could egos have in another race that couldn't be provided by an old race which has been brought to a high degree of cultivation by them?

The principle of cyclic law must apply to collective racial development as well as to individual bodies. In the case of any vehicle, therefore, after maximum use has been made of its possibilities, the old body is not regenerated. The knowledge gained in that former body or race, and the assimilation of it, change the relationship of the indwelling ego to its vehicle, and there is need to generate a new body of appropriately greater capacities. The past development has brought inner progress and refinements of culture which result in the ability to create a better instrument for further evolution. That instrument is a new race, free of past limitation and affording other directions of growth. A physical body, for example, can be improved with care and attention only up to a certain point. Beyond that, the ego requires a new organization of energies for experience.

Races do not exist as ends in themselves, but are means for education of the reincarnating ego, for the evolution of soul. Race bodies are taken on by the egos as garments they have created in connection with others, and are suitable for human needs and activities during a given cycle of experience. The whole universe, in fact, exists for the sake of the soul's experience and growth. Thus, when the egos who have brought a race to its highest point of cultivation begin to leave it, the declining energies of the race vehicle may be utilized by egos whose capacities and Karma draw them to this heritage. Mr. Judge amplifies:

> The theory outlined by H. P. Blavatsky is that when the Egos inhabiting any race have reached the limit of experience possible in it, they begin to desert that race environment and seek for another, which, in the sure processes of nature's evolution, is certain to be in existence elsewhere on the globe. The Egos then having left the old families, the latter begin to die out through sterility attacking the females, so that fewer and fewer bodies are made for inhabitancy. This goes on from century to century *pari passu* with mental decay. And this mental deterioration arises from the fact that the small stock of what we might call the retarded Egos who come in during the process have not had the experience and training in that particular environment which had been gone through by those who have deserted to another race, and hence—on the theosophical theory that brain is not the producer of mind—the whole *personnel* of the old race rushes down in the scale, sooner or later presenting the sad spectacle of a dying race.

Furthermore, whether these adjustments come about at the hands of nature, through cataclysms, or through the contact with the new and conquering race, which may or may not be violent, Mr. Judge's comments on the predecessors of the American Indians, subjected to floods and upheavals of the earth, suggest that these great cycles, no less than the smaller ones experienced by men, are the inescapable maturing in time of their own thought and action. He says:

> The men, having reason to guide them, removed themselves to other parts to carry out the sad decrees of Karma which had ordered their demise. . . . Now our civilization with weapons and other means is completing the work, as it on its part fulfils the law by creating on the old soil an entirely new race in which the experience gained by the mind in prior cycles of existence may show itself forth.

It is the evolutionary needs of egos that give significance to the question of the differences afforded by various racial groups. Thus, the pioneering so obviously a part of the development of a new race, might take the form of psychological innovations rather than physical conquest. The network of interaction that supports a living community might be very complex in its developing social awareness, while at the same time deceptively simple to the observer in its physical or external structures. Such differences show the wide ranges of experience produced by Karma, to be recognized as opportunities for diverse development rather than measures of advancement. Races are means, not evolutionary ends.

on the lookout

Withered Language

In the *Saturday Review* for Nov. 15, 1975, Benjamin DeMott, a frequent contributor, turns his discussion of a current novel, *Guerillas,* by V. S. Naipaul, into a brief essay on the impoverishment of contemporary language. Speaking of the hero of this story, Mr. DeMott says:

> The reason why Peter Roche is shadow, not substance, the reason why neither he nor we can touch his commitment, is that the terms necessary for the dramatization of that commitment are no longer utterable. Like many another writer on political subjects nowadays, V. S. Naipaul has been victimized by the withering away of the language of altruism; convention dictates that the selflessly giving political man must present himself as an enigma, must declare himself inexplicable, must discover no expressible reason for his being. Incapable of naming his "virtue," he stands before his own decency in puzzlement and ultimately vanishes as a person, devoured by profound—and profoundly inexpressible embarrassment. There are novels whose failure tells us more about where we are, what we've cut loose from, and what the cutting-loose costs, than do a hundred formally successful works. Looked at as political fiction, *Guerillas* is one of them.

Loss of "the True World"

The situation in literature is somewhat as Nietzsche put it years ago. In *The Twilight of Idols* he explained the meaning of his often quoted description of the assassination of "God" in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* saying:

> We have abolished the true world. What has remained? The apparent one perhaps? Oh no! With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one. . . .

So language breaks down without the meanings born in us from the true world—the world of ideals where the conception of man as altruist, as a soul committed to the service of his fellows, gains its reality. Modern man has been trying to live in the "apparent world," cut off from its spiritual source, for some time now,

with result that literature and the arts are rapidly withering. Critics such as Mr. DeMott seem aware of this self-deprivation and are calling for a return to those convictions about the nature of man which can restore vital meaning to language.

Sources of Linguistic Pollution

Scholars have lately become increasingly aware of this failure of modern language to embody serious meanings. In the *American Scholar* for the Autumn of 1974, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., made a different analysis:

> The rise of mass communications, the growth of large organizations and novel technologies, the invention of advertising and public relations, the professionalization of education —all contributed to linguistic pollution, upsetting the ecological balance between words and their environment. In our own time the purity of language is under unrelenting attack from every side—from professors as well as from politicians, from newspapermen as well as from advertising men, from men of the cloth as well as from men of the sword, and not least from the compilers of modern dictionaries who propound the suicidal thesis that all usages are equal and correct.

A rereading of H.P.B.'s article, "The Tidal Wave," seems appropriate, in connection with commentary of this sort.

Emerson's Diagnosis

Aptly, Mr. Schlesinger quotes from Emerson to point the moral of his discussion of the decline of language:

> "A man's power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it," said Emerson, "depends upon the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth, and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of idea is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, of praise . . . words are perverted to stand for things which are not."

Eventually, we may think, the words "for things which are" die out of current speech. This is the charge made by Mr. DeMott. Meanwhile, Emerson's counsel is still the only solution: remove the corruption of man and the restoration of language will follow in due course.

"Imprisoning Selfhood"

The tide of cultural criticism is slowly gathering strength in

this direction. Two contemporary writers of growing eminence, Joyce Carol Oates and Wendell Berry, have noted a debilitating preoccupation with self in modern literature. In a recent issue (Spring, 1975) of the *Hudson Review* Mr. Berry spoke of the loss of "the traditions that have always bound poetry to the concerns and values of the spirit." A first obligation of the poet, he says, is to purify language, not merely "to write poems with it." If the poet fails in this—if he does not renew "the knowledge and meanings of action known from the past, . . . actions worthy of the patience and work of whole lives—actions, even, that no whole life can complete," then, indeed, "both in life and in art, the consciousness of our people will be fragmentary." Mr. Berry speaks of poets who condemn themselves to work within "the boundaries of an imprisoning and damning selfhood," and Joyce Carol Oates, in an interview reported in *Psychology Today* for May, 1973, declares that "the myth of the 'isolated self' will be the most difficult to destroy." The true self of the writer, she says, "is part of a larger reservoir of energy," adding: "As long as the myth of separate and competitive 'selves' endures, we will have a society obsessed with adolescent ideas of being superior, of conquering, of destroying."

A Broader Focus

This is a theme taken up by Peter Marin in *Harper's* for last October. Under the title, "The New Narcissism," he comments caustically on "the trend in therapy towards a deification of the isolated self." After sampling the offerings and claims of some of the current cults of psychological self-improvement he charges that these are "the ways in which selfishness and moral blindness now assert themselves in the larger culture as enlightenment and health." It is difficult to tell whether this writer is entirely just in his particular castigations, but an over-all inspection of the fashionable scene of "group therapy" and "growth center" activities reveals little concern for the ideal of a brotherhood of man, while there is much emphasis on personal development and achievement. For contrast with the typical appeal to self-interest—to "the dream of an individual potency"—Mr. Marin recalls the spirit of Black Elk, the visionary Indian leader who said: "Hear me, not for myself but for my people."

Loss of Fellowship

Commenting, the *Harper's* writer says:

> The tale in this instance is not of power but of love—not only for the gods or the self but for the world of others, those whose presence creates for the self a body as truly one's own as the flesh. That love, that sense of lived relation, is at the heart not only of tribal lore, but at the center of the legends of most cultures. One thinks of Odysseus surrounded by his comrades seeking to return to his home, or of Gilgamesh driven to seek the secret of immortality by the death of Enkidu, his friend. Both of them are moved by what lies behind all myth and long-lived culture: the felt sense of relation and reciprocity. Indeed, that reciprocity is identical to culture: a collective creation and habitation of value sustains what we carelessly call the "individual" self. But that, in our dream of power, we no longer remember. It disappears from our myths, it vanishes from our therapies, and we come to worlds of mystery much as we came long ago to the new world: with greed and fear rather than awe and love. In the name of power we strip it of everything real, and it becomes nothing more than a reflection of our need.
>
> What is lost in that whole process is a crucial part of our own human nature, our unacknowledged hunger for relation, what might be called "an appetence for Good": the needful reaching out for life in a larger world.

Damage from Therapy?

Although here and there Mr. Marin seems somewhat harsher than need be in his judgments—overlooking the kindly and humanitarian qualities of certain therapists—his conclusions, on the whole, are accurate enough. There is a lack of fellow-feeling, of generosity and altruism in many of these groups and movements, and it may be that perception of this lack lies behind the criticism of modern psychotherapy offered in the Summer 1975 issue of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology,* in which a writer asks:

> What is the rate of therapist-induced suicides? Of increased depression, guilt, and anxiety which have been directly caused by therapy? We have no idea, since such questions have not been pursued by research which largely has been in the hands of quasi-defensive therapeutic professionals. Rather the research has proceeded on the assumption that therapy is effective (only belatedly and surprisingly to discover that the research cannot prove that improvements have occurred) even though in ten per cent of the cases damaging effects have been observed.

Dubious "Measurement"

The strong mood of dissatisfaction here expressed may reflect not only a lack of confidence in the methods of present-day psychotherapy, but also the inherent weakness in attempting to "measure" human influence and give it some sort of "grade." Psychoanalysis has been called "the purchase of friendship," an expression suggestive of both the value and the weakness of the typical client-therapist relationship. If the label be accepted, then how can one justify a statistical approach to the benefits of "friendship"? The whole idea of measurement of value in such matters seems awry. Who knows enough to measure benefit, save in matters of gross certainty, which are often not present in psychological ailments? There have been humanistic psychologists—A. H. Maslow was one in particular—who maintained that psychoanalysis will not accomplish much of wide or lasting value until it converts itself into an educational program. But meanwhile the question of basic philosophy remains unsolved, and the evidence for this may be seen in such criticisms as those contributed by Peter Marin to *Harper's* for last October.

"Chemical Holidays"

His charge that the theme of selfishness seems everywhere present in fashionable therapies recalls Martin Buber's strictures concerning the taking of Mescalin or other hallucinogenic drugs as a means to supposedly "spiritual" experience or states. Commenting on Aldous Huxley's *Doorways to Perception,* Buber wrote (in *The Knowledge of Man*):

> "Through the taking of a suitable chemical preparation," so Huxley says, "everyone is enabled to know from within of what the mystics speak"; the speechless primal ground of being opens itself to him in the objects. No distinction exists any longer between inner and outer, between subject and object. Naturally Huxley must avoid the eyes of those present in the room, people who are otherwise especially dear to him: they belong, indeed, to the "world of selfhood" that he has left.
>
> With this concept he describes, without naming it, the common world. When he speaks of the mescalin trance as one of different kinds of "flight out of selfhood and environment," to which flight the urge is "present in almost every man at almost every time," then he means again the common world from which the enjoyer of mescalin flees for the duration of his trance. Huxley calls it, to be sure, the "urge to go beyond the

> self," by which he means that here man escapes the entanglement in the net of his utilitarian aims. But in reality the consumer of mescalin does not emerge from this net into some sort of free participation in common being; rather merely into a strictly proper sphere given to him as his own for several hours. The "chemical holidays" of which Huxley speaks are holidays not only from the petty I, enmeshed in the machinery of its aims, but also from the person participating in the community of logos and cosmos—holidays from the very uncomfortable reminder to verify oneself as such a person.

Cults of Personal Development

This might be taken as the classical humanist rejoinder to the claims of those who forget the basic obligations of members of the human race—the moral and ethical unities which bind all together—while pursuing some allegedly "spiritual" goal and claiming that its benefits outweigh all possible objections or criticisms. Peter Marin repeats—somewhat more sharply—the criticisms made by Martin Buber, the fundamental issue being the lack of a generosity of heart, an indifference to the welfare of others. The fascinations of psychological states, of conditions of feeling, shut out thought about the needs of other human beings and the suffering of the great mass of mankind.

"Problems" in Buddhism

A thoughtful discussion of Buddhist philosophy appears in the *Theosophist* for July, 1975, in the form of a paper read at the International Seminar of Buddhism held in Bodh-Gaya in 1970. The author is Jaideva Singh, who gives attention to "three important problems"—the claim that Buddhism is nihilistic, that it is atheistic, and that it denies the reality of an enduring or permanent self. Mr. Singh quickly disposes of the charges of nihilism and atheism by reference to Buddhist texts. He shows that the Reality postulated in Buddhist thought is transcendent, indicating the relativity of all else. The same argument, in effect, applies to the claim that Buddhism is atheistic, which has meaning only when applied to the doctrine of a personal, anthropomorphic God. On this point the writer says in conclusion:

> Buddhism has been described as atheism in the popular sense of the word. I do not think it can be described as atheism in the fullest signification of the term. It would be a grotesque misrepresentation of Buddhism to suggest that it considers Reality as materialistic.

> If it is not atheistic, is it theistic? I do not think it can be called theistic either in the usual sense of the word. It may be described as pantheism, according to which the Divine Principle is both transcendent to and immanent in the world.

Denial of "Self"

Mr. Singh's discussion of the *"no-self doctrine of Buddhism"* is of particular interest for the reason that it has long been a bone of contention. No doctrinal assertion is urged with greater insistence than this one by the Theravada Buddhists. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 14) H.P.B. calls attention to it as the teaching of the Southern Church, in particular that of the Siamese sect, which is considered to have "the *purest* form of exoteric Buddhism." This teaching she says, "denies (a) the existence of any Deity, and (b) any conscious *post-mortem* life, or even any self-conscious surviving individuality in man." After giving some texts bearing on the latter question, Mr. Singh says:

> From the above quotation, it appears that the Buddha did teach something which is our true Self, which is our true essence. But that essence is supra-personal, transcendental and cannot be described in any human language. George Grimm in his *Language of the Buddha* puts the substance of this teaching of the Buddha in one sentence ". . . personality in its elements is something alien to our true essence." H. V. Glasenapp quotes in his *Buddhism* a very significant sentence . . . , "The not-self is transmigration, the self is the *tathagata*."

The True Self

> The Buddha emphasized the no-self doctrine because he found that all the suffering in life arose out of *trishna* or craving. Craving is due to self-love. Man considers his psycho-physical states to be the self and craves for pleasure of these. In order to knock out craving, it was necessary to demolish self on which this craving was based. It is the view of a particular self . . . which is responsible for all evil and suffering. That is why the doctrine of the self was so vigorously denied.

Yet, as Mr. Singh shows, there are at least veiled references to the true self in exoteric Buddhist teaching. The "enlightened ones," it is said, "realize the pure Self and thus become identified with the Higher Universal Self." This is from Asanga, or Aryasangha. Interpreting, Mr. Singh adds:

> By using words like suddhatma, mahatma, etc., he [Asanga] is only elucidating the implication of his master's teaching that

it is the personality or empirical self which has to be extinguished but that there is such a thing as the supra-personal, transcendental Self which is our true essence.

Sutratma the Key

Helpful observations on this question may be found in Edward Conze's *Buddhism,* so far as historical Buddhism is concerned, but the most clarifying explanation doubtless lies in a study of the teaching of the *Sutratma* or "thread soul," upon which all the lives in successive personalities are strung. Conze, incidentally, remarks that common sense among Buddhists often insists that the idea of a continuing soul be recognized, and much effort is expended by the orthodox to suppress this "heresy." Of all Western writers, Edmond Holmes discusses this demand of "common sense" with the greatest appeal and logic in *The Creed of Buddha.* Theosophical students will find it helpful to read carefully what H.P.B. has to say concerning the permanent individuality and its essential nature, in contradistinction to the personal man. And in connection with scholarly works which quote "Asanga," it would be well to refer to what is said in the *Glossary* article under "Aryasangha."

Also in the *Glossary,* under "Buddhism," H.P.B. remarks that "Real Buddhism can be appreciated only by blending the philosophy of the Southern Church and the metaphysics of the Northern Schools," and it might be remembered, in view of present-day expositions of Northern Buddhism, that H.P.B. recalled Tsong-kha-pa's prophecy to the effect that the true doctrine would be "maintained in its purity only so long as Tibet is kept free from the incursions of western nations." ("Tibetan Teachings.") She also said (in the *Glossary* under "Dugpas") that "Northern Buddhism in its purified, metaphysical form is almost entirely unknown."

That Which Perseveres

Finally, Col. Olcott's discussion of the "no-soul doctrine" in his *Buddhist Catechism* should be consulted on this question. Following is a portion of this work quoted in one of the appendices on Devachan belonging to the "Fragments of Occult Truth" series published in the *Theosophist* (see THEOSOPHY 2:398). In introducing this extract from the *Buddhist Catechism,* H.P.B. observed that since Olcott wrote "not only under the approval of

the High Priest [Sumungala], but also under the direct instruction of his Guru (Spiritual Master), his words will have weight for the student of Occultism." Since, Col. Olcott says, "countless generations . . . are required to develop a man into a Buddha, and *the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births,* what shall we call that which thus wills and perserves?" He answers:

> *Character?* or Individuality; an individuality but partly manifested in any *one* birth, but built up of fragments from all the births?
>
> The denial of "soul" by Buddha (See *Sanyutto Nikaya,* the Sutta Pitaka) points to the prevalent delusive belief in an independent transmissible personality; an entity that could move from birth to birth unchanged, or go to a place or state where, as such perfect entity, it could eternally enjoy or suffer. And what he shows is that the "I am I" consciousness is, as regards permanency, logically impossible, since its elementary constituents constantly change, and the "I" of one birth differs from the "I" of every other birth. But everything that I have found in Buddhism accords with the theory of a gradual evolution of the perfect man, viz., a Buddha through numberless natal experiences.

Shakespeare's "Background"

The May 1975 *Shakespeare Newsletter* reprints a portion of John Masefield's Romanes Lecture of 1924 on "Shakespeare and the Spiritual Life," in which the poet said:

> Shakespeare's schooling was sufficient for his needs. "Knowledge was not the law of his being: he got as much as was good for him; no more." What kindled him to poetry will forever remain a mystery, but it was both a delight and interest to him before he left Stratford. What power had these forces of knowledge over him? "Religion meant almost nothing to him, education little more, tradition a great deal more, and superstition very much indeed." . . .
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> It was in *Julius Caesar* that Shakespeare climbed from his instinctive and romantic self into the adventure of great poetry. Here the boy grew up. The play was a new kind of vision of all the old evidences of the scheme of things. In it Shakespeare "had a profound visionary knowledge, attended with every ecstasy of power, of the spiritual nature of change in this world." He came away from that vision with a new understanding of superstition: vengeful ghosts, however exciting, are no holier than men.

"The Rock Which Endures"

> Hamlet too is lit with visionary knowledge, and, like his creator, he questions the orders given him by destiny. "Destiny wins, yet the fine mind was right; it was lovelier than Destiny." . . .
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> Shakespeare once more glimpsed the workings of spirits in human life, but more intensely than he had in *Julius Caesar*. In *Macbeth* he presented powers who want the rhythm of life broken, and attempt to break it by inarticulate cryings, prophecies which are misinterpreted and misunderstood. Macbeth and his wife fall prey to this devilish will and become "two traitors trying to protect themselves by blood." . . .
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> . . . his [Shakespeare's] belief was in himself, out of which he made a system capable of moving us profoundly, no matter what our creeds. "The images of his belief walk the world still like the only realities. They are the imaginations of the poet, in a way nothing but dreams, and in another way the rock which endures, when the crown has fallen and the creed ceased and the race become a memory."

Intellectual "Sphinx"

In the same issue of the *Newsletter,* its editor, Louis Marder, discusses the few who are still "prepared to defend in a scholarly manner the theory that Bacon, Oxford, or Marlowe are the authors of the works of Shakespeare." Virtually all the champions of this view, Prof. Marder says, "hold the position that Shakespeare was uneducated because there are no records of attendance in Stratford!" He lists some of the "facts" enumerated by one such contender that Shakespeare did not write "Shakespeare":

> Shakespeare could not have known the 29,000 words in the concordance; Shakespeare did not travel, knew no law, owned no books, wrote no letters, knew no gardening, daughters couldn't write, the imagery of sun(male)-moon(female) is not Shakespeare's, etc.; the only evidence for Shakespeare's authorship is his name on the title-pages!

Readers who would like to acquaint themselves with what *is* known about Shakespeare might enjoy Marchette Chute's delightful book, *Shakespeare of London*. And students may find it suggestive, in connection with these arguments, to recall H.P.B.'s comment (*S.D.* II, 419) that he "was and will ever remain the intellectual 'Sphinx' of the ages," as well as Mr. Judge's remark in *Echoes from the Orient*: "And the Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number."